



# Montgomery County Council

*From the Office of Councilmember Phil Andrews*

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**For Immediate Release**

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## **STATEMENT BY COUNCILMEMBER PHIL ANDREWS ON THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT SECOND REPORT ON TRAFFIC STOP DATA**

"The data in the report indicates that the men and women of the Montgomery County Police Department are diligently enforcing traffic safety, as they should. I applaud Chief Moose for the strong emphasis he has put on traffic safety enforcement since becoming Chief of Police in 1999. The fact that MCPD officers recorded 41,069 traffic stops between April 1, 2001 and September 30, 2001, an increase of approximately 25 percent over the previous six-month period, indicates that the department is responding to the need for more enforcement of traffic laws. The safety of our county drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians depends on it.

In evaluating the data, it is wrong to use the racial makeup of the county's population as the standard of comparison for traffic stop data, because it is most likely different than the driving population. The best standard of comparisons, at present, are non-discretionary traffic enforcement measures such as the county's red-light cameras, and low-discretionary measures such as radar/laser devices.

Applying this standard of comparison, for example, the data shows the following: of the 30,040 county residents pulled over by police for a traffic stop, 21.6 percent were black. The data also shows that of county residents issued a traffic citation, 21 percent were black. And of the 14,416 vehicles caught by the county's red-light cameras (this number includes both county resident and non-county resident vehicle owners), 21.8 percent of the owners were black. This is a strong indicator that MCPD officers are not engaging in racial profiling.

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It is also notable that only nine formal complaints resulted from the more than 41,000 traffic stops, a rate of less than one in 4,500, and that 89 percent of traffic stops lasted 10 minutes or less.

The data shows that police searched 3 percent of vehicles stopped. The fact that police officers found contraband in 26 percent of the consensual searches (in 114 of 434 consensual searches) suggests that the county's police officers are exercising reasonable judgment in deciding when to ask for permission to search a vehicle."

*Phil Andrews chairs the Montgomery County Council's Public Safety Committee.*

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